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CULTIVATED BLUEBERRIES

by

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Growers and Nurserymen

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Berries Marketed as True-Blu Brand

Easy to Grow

Blueberries are not as difficult to grow as some people believe, but they do need a little special attention. Those folks who give them this special attention are well rewarded for their efforts.

For commercial use, a two-year-old plant is the best size to set out.

For landscape or gardening, a 3- or 4-year plant will give a fair crop of berries the first year, as well as abundant growth for hedge effect.

Best months to set out are April and May.

Acid Soil Essential

The essential requirement for successful Blueberry culture is an acid soil, one well supplied with organic material, and of loose texture, thus making it the more retentive of moisture. If your soil does not meet these requirements, the proper conditions may be created by mixing the surface soil with a liberal quantity of peat moss, partially rotted leaves, pine needles, or sawdust. Sharp sand may be mixed with the soil to keep it light and porous so that the roots may be properly aerated and able to breathe. Soil similar for the growing of Rhododendrons, Laurels or Azaleas will grow Blueberries.

Distance Apart to Set Plants

For Home Gardening, 3 to 4 feet apart.

For Commercial Growing, 5 by 10 feet apart.

For small plantings, Blueberries are set 3 to 4 feet apart. A hole should be dug 18 to 24 inches wide and 8 to 10 inches deep. The soil coming from this hole should be mixed with equal parts of peat moss and sharp sand and placed around the roots of the Blueberry plant. If there is enough decayed organic material in the soil, the plant will receive sufficient nourishment. Never use lime, as this would sweeten the soil, and such a condition is to be avoided.

The plants should be set with the roots spread out, not bunched. They should be set so that the first branch will come just above the surface of the ground and on a grade with the ground. The soil should be replaced and firmed, and the roots soaked with water. This is called puddling in.

As Blueberries are not self-pollinating, two or more varieties should be planted near each other to insure satisfactory fruiting.

Cultivate Shallow

The Blueberry is shallow-rooted and accordingly cultivation should be shallow. It should be frequent enough to keep down weeds. Blueberry plants grow well

if mulched heavily with straw, sawdust or peat moss. Such mulching materials applied to the depth of several inches keep down weeds, keep the soil cooler in summer, and help to retain soil moisture. In the spring, a complete organic fertilizer, such as a 7-7-7 formula, is recommended. Apply about one tablespoonful per plant, increasing the amount each year as the plant increases in size. This should be worked into the top of the ground around each bush, keeping 6 inches away from the main stem, and working outward about 18 inches.

A Year-Round Shrub

As an ornamental shrub the Blueberry is outstanding, as each season brings its beauty. A planting of these bushes in your shrubbery border or in your garden will yield delight at any time. In spring, they are full of creamy, fragrant blossoms, followed by the clusters of characteristically blue fruit. The plants are compact and low growing with waxy green leaves turning to a brilliant scarlet in the fall. Even in winter the stems are a dark red and very showy among other plantings.

Blueberry Recipes

The large cultivated Blueberry has met a favorable reception on the markets for fresh fruit, canning and quick freezing. Fresh berries are unsurpassed served with sugar and cream, as an addition to fruit salads, and in the justly famous Blueberry pie. The canned or quick frozen berries are well known for muffins and fruit puddings. Following are some recipes which we have collected and pass on to you in the hope that you will enjoy them as much as we have.

BLUEBERRY PIE

4 cups Blueberries
1 cup sugar
4 tbsp. flour
 $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt
1 tbsp. lemon juice
1 recipe plain pastry

Mix berries with sugar, flour, salt and lemon juice. Line pie pan with pastry, pour in filling and cover with top crust. Bake in very hot oven (450°) 10 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350° and bake 20 to 30 minutes longer. Makes 1 pie (9-inch).

BLUEBERRY MUFFINS

3 tbsp. butter
 $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups sugar
1 egg
2 cups milk
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. nutmeg
4 cups flour
4 tsp. baking powder
2 cups Blueberries

Cream butter and sugar, add beaten egg, then milk alternately with sifted dry ingredients. Add Blueberries last. Bake in greased muffin tins in hot oven (400°) for 20 to 30 minutes. Makes 24 muffins.

BLUEBERRY COTTAGE PUDDING

2 tbsp. butter
 $\frac{3}{8}$ cup sugar
1 egg
1 cup flour
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder
 $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt
2 cups Blueberries
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup milk

Cream butter and sugar, add beaten egg and mix well. Add flour sifted with baking powder and salt and mix with berries. Add milk and mix well. Bake in a greased loaf-pan 20 minutes, in moderate oven. Serve warm with cream, ice cream, or vanilla sauce.

BLUEBERRIES (CANNED)

Select firm, slightly under-ripe fruit. Wash carefully. Pack cold in sterilized jars. Add light or medium syrup, as your taste prefers to within one-half inch of top of jar. Adjust caps. Process in pressure cooker 8 minutes at 5-lb. pressure.

Select firm, slightly under-ripe fruit. Wash carefully. Pack into sterilized jars. Add hot, light or medium syrup. Adjust caps. Process 20 minutes in boiling water bath.

BLUEBERRIES (FROZEN)

Select firm fruit. Pick over, wash, drain well. Pack 1 part by weight of sugar to 4 parts by weight of fruit (1 cup sugar to 6 cups fruit); or in syrup to cover. Seal boxes and quick freeze.

BLUEBERRY JAM

4½ cups—2¼ lbs. prepared
fruit
7 cups—3 lbs. sugar
1 bottle pectin

To prepare fruit, crush about 1½ quarts fully ripe berries. Add juice of 1 medium lemon and grated rind of ½ lemon. Measure sugar and prepared fruit into large kettle, mix well, and bring to a full rolling boil over hot fire. Stir constantly before and while boiling. Boil hard 2 minutes. Remove from fire and stir in pectin. Skim; pour quickly. Paraffin at once. Makes 12 glasses.

FROZEN BLUEBERRY WHIP

1 cup sieved Blueberries
1/3 cup sugar
2 tbsps. lemon juice
Few grains salt
2 egg whites

Combine Blueberries, sugar, lemon juice and salt. Let stand 10 minutes, or until sugar is dissolved. Beat egg whites stiff, but not dry, fold in berry mixture. Pour into freezing tray of automatic refrigerator; set cold control at point recommended for freezing ice cream. Freeze until slightly firm. Place in chilled bowl. Beat smooth with rotary beater. Return to tray and freeze firm. Reset control to normal. Serves four.



Ask your Grocer for Blueberries: Fresh under TRU BLU brand, canned under South Haven brand. Quick frozen under several brands.